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United States
Department of
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Selected Speeches and News Releases

January 3 - January 9, 1991

IN THIS ISSUE:

News Releases—

Turn Those Old Tires into Watering Troughs

USDA Revises Country, Commodity Public Law 480 Allocations for Fiscal 1991

USDA Requests Public's Vigilance Against Purchasing Smuggled Birds

Missouri Stockyard Loses Right to Handle Cattle Requiring Brucellosis Tests

USDA Requests Comments on 1991 Rice Program

USDA Releases Cost of Food at Home for November

Test Detects, Recovers Harmful Food-Borne Bacterium

USDA Announces Tennessee Burley Tobacco Referendum

USDA Requests Proposals for Milk Inventory Management Study

USDA Announces Dairy Collection and Refund Program

Spouses Considered Separate "Persons" for Payment Limitation Purposes in 1991

USDA Proposes PACA License Fee Increase

USDA to Increase Dairy Product Grading and Inspection Fees

FSIS Offers New Food Safety Publication for Consumers

USDA Proposes Grade Standards for Dairy Breeding Cattle

USDA Announces Food Safety Workshops on Meat and Poultry Inspection

Microbiological Advisory Committee to Meet January 22-25 in Atlanta

News Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Public Affairs

TURN THOSE OLD TIRES INTO WATERING TROUGHS

WASHINGTON—If you have some wornout heavy-duty rubber tires from a piece of heavy equipment, and you're not permitted to either burn or bury them, and you'd like to be ecologically sensitive, here's the solution: turn those tires into watering troughs for livestock.

That's what U.S. Department of Agriculture employees in West Virginia are helping farmers to do. In addition, if the farmers have an erosion problem which can be treated by use of tire-troughs, and if the devices meet particular technical specifications, then the farmers may become eligible for the Agricultural Conservation Program, a cost-sharing program administered by USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

"This means that 'tires-as-troughs' is a certifiable conservation practice in West Virginia," said Herb Andrick, district conservationist with USDA's Soil Conservation Service in Philippi, W.Va.

Andrick said that the used tires, which generally come from such large equipment items as heavy earth moving machinery, are about six to eight feet in diameter and weigh about 1,000 to 1,500 lbs. before they are converted into troughs. When such a tire is laid on its side it measures about two to three feet deep.

Although a tire starts out with a sidewall on each side, the sidewall on one side is cut away throughout the tire's circumference. "This opens up the top of the tire trough so that livestock can reach the water inside the tire," he said.

With assistance from SCS conservationists, farmers run inlet and outlet pipes through the wheel opening in the bottom sidewall. Water from a nearby spring or pond flows through the inlet pipe into the trough, as long as the water source is higher than the trough. Excess water leaves the trough through the outlet pipe.

A trench is dug about 18 inches into the ground, so that the pipes won't freeze. The pipes are then put into place in the trench, and are covered with 18 inches of compacted clay. The tire is then rested on top of the clay, sealing the bottom of the trough, and the bottom hole of the tire is filled with concrete.

Cecil Springer, SCS soil conservation technician in Philippi, said that the first advantage of the tire trough is that it is cheap. "A tire trough can be installed for less than \$100, which includes cost of the pipes, concrete, and farm labor," he said. "By contrast, a current standard trough—which is a precast trough made of concrete—costs around \$500."

He also said that the tire trough can store up to 800 gallons of water, compared to about 400 gallons in the concrete trough. According to

Springer, a second advantage is that the tire trough is expected to outlast the concrete trough. "Because the rubber in the tire is flexible," he said, "water that freezes in the tire won't change it." In addition, ice thaws faster because the tires are black and therefore absorb rather than reflect the sun's rays.

A third advantage is that most hunters' bullets can't penetrate the thick rubber and two steel belts in the tire treads which make up the sides of the trough. Finally, virtually nothing can shove a tire trough around.

"That's because a tire trimmed to become a trough, including the concrete base and pipes, weighs nearly a ton—and that's before you add the water," he said.

Springer cautioned that a tire should be checked to ensure that, in its "previous life," it had not been filled with antifreeze or other toxins to add to its weight. "This could leach into the water in the trough and contaminate it," he said.

However, if the tire does not have that problem, then it might provide a conservation-based alternative to concrete troughs.

"The tires are usually literally throwaways," he said. "But we're helping to make sure that, as troughs, they've got a whole different life left—and the livestock seem mighty grateful."

Herb Andrick (304) 457-4517

Issued January 3, 1991

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USDA REVISES COUNTRY, COMMODITY PUBLIC LAW 480 ALLOCATIONS FOR FISCAL 1991

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today issued revised country and commodity allocations for fiscal 1991 under the Food for Peace and Food for Progress Programs, as authorized by Public Law 480 through Dec. 31, 1990.

Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard Crowder said current program plans provide for distribution of \$784.2 million in commodity shipments, up slightly from \$767.0 million estimated in the previous quarterly allocation. Of the current amount, \$568.2 million is presently allocated and \$216.0 million is being held in a reserve to furnish commodities for unforeseen needs during the remainder of the fiscal year.

Crowder also said that Hungary has been allocated \$7.5 million to finance the purchase of feed grains and that Pakistan's \$80-million allocation to finance the purchase of vegetable oil was returned to the unallocated reserve. New agreements signed since the last quarter are with El Salvador, Guyana, Jamaica, Sierra Leone and Tunisia. Current Food for Progress participants are Nicaragua and Panama.

The revised allocations meet the legal requirement of Section III of P.L. 480, which directs that not less than 75 percent of the food commodities be allocated to friendly countries that meet the per capita income criterion for lending by the International Development Association. Currently the countries in this category are those with an annual per capita gross national product of \$1,135 or less.

Crowder said the program takes into account many variables including commodity and budget availabilities; changing economic and foreign policy situations, including human rights assessments; potential for market development; fluctuations in commodity prices; availability of handling, storage and distribution facilities; and possible disincentives to local production.

Since situations may develop which could cause a change in country and commodity allocations during the fiscal year, these allocations do not represent final U.S. commitments nor agreements with participating governments, although a number of Titles I/III agreements have been signed and more are expected to be signed shortly.

Title I of P.L. 480 is a concessional sales program designed to promote exports of agricultural commodities from the United States and to foster economic development in recipient countries. The program provides export credit of up to 40 years, with a grace period of up to 10 years and low interest rates.

Title III provides for the forgiveness of the debt incurred under Title I, based on accomplishments in food for development programs and projects agreed upon by the United States and recipient countries.

The Food for Progress Program provides commodities to needy countries, on a grant or loan basis, to promote economic reform.

Additional technical information on the P.L. 480 program is available from Mary Chambliss of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, (202) 447-3573.

Sally Klusaritz (202) 447-3448
Arthur Whitmore (202) 447-4026

#

USDA REQUESTS PUBLIC'S VIGILANCE AGAINST PURCHASING SMUGGLED BIRDS

WASHINGTON—Jan. 3—Do you know where your pet bird really came from? Will it become ill and die for no apparent reason? Will it spread disease to other pets, or even humans?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture once again is warning the public and commercial buyers of exotic birds to be sure they do not purchase smuggled birds.

USDA also thanks those who heeded past warnings and thus reduced the risk of bringing in exotic and virulent diseases that often accompany illegally imported birds.

“We are extremely gratified at the marked reduction of exotic Newcastle disease outbreaks in pet birds in the United States over the past three years,” said Dr. James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, “Especially when we remember an outbreak in southern California in the early 1970's that cost the U.S. taxpayers \$56-million to eradicate.”

In that outbreak, caused by imported pet birds, an estimated 12 million birds died or were destroyed. Fortunately, because of action by state and federal eradication teams, exotic Newcastle disease (velogenic viscerotropic Newcastle disease) has not spread to commercial poultry flocks since then.

Every year from January through early spring, hundreds of exotic birds are smuggled illegally into the United States after the winter breeding season. The most popular birds illegally imported for sale to the public are the hookbill variety, such as the yellow-naped Amazon. Often they are sold by street vendors and bring disease and losses to unsuspecting buyers.

USDA investigates outbreaks of exotic Newcastle disease in pet birds. This past year was the first year since 1978 that there have been no

reported cases of the disease in pet or caged birds. "This is a result of continued public vigilance and an increased public awareness of the dangers stemming from smuggled birds," Glosser said.

According to Glosser, if birds are carrying the exotic Newcastle disease virus, people who come in contact with them may develop eye inflammations. Birds with psitticosis, another infectious disease, can transmit mild flu-like symptoms to humans. Infants and the elderly are particularly at risk of becoming infected.

Smuggled birds could also bring a particularly virulent type of Salmonella into this country. This disease agent, called Salmonella enteritidis phage-type 4, has caused great public health concern in England and parts of Europe and Africa. To protect United States' interests, the USDA has placed stringent restrictions on the importation of birds, eggs and poultry products from countries where phage-type 4 in poultry is known to exist.

Many endangered species of birds are also not allowed entry into the United States, but some can enter under certain regulations. According to Glosser, the birds must be declared to Federal inspectors, be accompanied by appropriate permits, and enter after a minimum 30-day quarantine at one of six USDA-operated facilities. APHIS tests the birds during the quarantine to make sure they are free of exotic Newcastle and other communicable poultry diseases.

If you buy exotic birds in the United States, make certain you purchase them from licensed dealers. Birds authorized for sale have a circular, stainless steel, USDA-approved leg-band. The band is engraved with three letters and three numbers.

If you suspect a bird may have been smuggled into the United States, don't buy it! If you have information about possible smuggled birds, report it to any office of the U.S. Customs Service or call APHIS (301) 436-8073 in Hyattsville, Md.

If you are planning to purchase a bird while abroad, learn about the strict rules governing its importation. For a free pamphlet on purchasing birds write: Pet Bird Pamphlet, USDA-APHIS, Room 613, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. A fact sheet for dealers and hobbyists on how to avoid the purchase of smuggled birds is also available upon request. Information on imported birds can be obtained from:

Federal Government

USDA Smuggled Bird Hotline
(301) 436-8073

U.S. Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
(202) 343-4955

Bird Industry

Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council
(202) 452-1525

Bird Hobbyists

American Federation of Aviculture
(602) 484-0931

International Aviculture Society
(813) 837-4555

Note to Editors: For details, contact Margaret Webb, USDA, APHIS, Legislative and Public Affairs, Public Information, Room 613, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. Telephone (301) 436-7799.

Margaret Webb (301) 436-6573

#

MISSOURI STOCKYARD LOSES RIGHT TO HANDLE CATTLE REQUIRING BRUCELLOSIS TESTS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has withdrawn its approval for the Joplin Missouri Regional Stockyard to handle cattle requiring testing for brucellosis.

“This action is necessary to deter the managers of this stockyard from committing violations and to prevent the dissemination of animal disease,” said James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Under regulations established to control and eradicate brucellosis, federally approved stockyards may receive cattle from states that are not brucellosis-free for test by a USDA-accredited veterinarian or a state or federal representative at the stockyard. Without this approval, cattle owners must provide for testing at the farm before shipment to a stockyard for interstate movement.

On several occasions during 1988, APHIS inspectors found the Joplin stockyard to be in violation of APHIS regulations by failing to identify and keep separate cattle from states not free of brucellosis. The stockyard also failed to provide the required documentation for animals handled at the yard.

“Animal identification throughout the livestock production process is critical to maintaining healthy livestock and for eradication and disease control programs,” Glosser said.

APHIS inspectors verified that the stockyard managers failed to maintain cattle identity; misrepresented cattle from Oklahoma, a Class B state which has a high incidence of brucellosis, as cattle from Missouri, which has achieved low-incidence, Class A status; and failed to maintain sanitary conditions.

The order to withdraw the federal status will take effect on Jan. 15, and remain in effect for five years.

The stockyard may continue to handle cattle not subject to regulations governing brucellosis for interstate commerce. Federal regulations are placed to safeguard animal and public health.

Brucellosis, also called Bang’s disease, is an infectious bacterial disease that causes abortions, reduced fertility and lower milk yields in cattle. The disease can be transmitted to humans.

Margaret Webb (301) 436-7799

#

USDA REQUESTS COMMENTS ON 1991 RICE PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4—The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Commodity Credit Corporation is requesting comments on provisions of the 1991 rice program.

Decisions on the 1991 program provisions will be made based on public comments and current estimates of U.S. supply and use.

Comments are requested on the following provisions:

- Whether an acreage reduction program should be implemented and, if so, the percentage reduction;
- the loan and purchase levels;
- loan rate adjustments for different rice classes;
- the level of the established target price;
- whether the secretary of agriculture should require producers to

purchase marketing certificates as a condition for permitting loan repayment at a reduced level;

—whether an inventory reduction program should be implemented.

Send comments to: Bruce R. Weber, Director, Commodity Analysis Division, USDA-ASCS, Room 3741-S, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013.

Comments must be received by Jan. 22.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-8206

#

USDA RELEASES COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR NOVEMBER

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4—Here is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's monthly update of the weekly cost of food at home for November 1990:

Chart on next page

Cost of food at home for a week in November 1990

	-----Food plans----- (In Dollars)			
	Thrifty	Low-cost	Moderate cost	Liberal
Families:				
Family of 2 (20-50 years)	48.10	60.60	74.70	92.80
Family of 2 (51 years and over)	45.80	58.30	71.80	85.70
Family of 4 with preschool children	70.10	87.30	106.60	130.90
Family of 4 with elemen- tary schoolchildren	80.10	102.50	128.20	154.40
Individuals in four-person families:				
Children:				
1-2 years	12.70	15.40	18.00	21.70
3-5 years	13.70	16.80	20.70	24.80
6-8 years	16.60	22.20	27.80	32.40
9-11 years	19.80	25.20	32.50	37.60
Females:				
12-19 years	20.80	24.80	30.10	36.40
20-50 years	20.80	25.80	31.30	40.10
51 and over	20.70	25.10	31.00	36.90
Males:				
12-14 years	20.60	28.60	35.70	41.90
15-19 years	21.40	29.60	36.80	42.60
20-50 years	22.90	29.30	36.60	44.30
51 and over	20.90	27.90	34.30	41.00

USDA’s Human Nutrition Information Service computes the cost of food at home for four food plans—thrifty, low-cost, moderate-cost, and liberal.

Sue Ann Ritchko, administrator of HNIS, said the plans consist of foods that provide well-balanced meals and snacks for a week.

In computing the costs, USDA assumes all food is bought at the store and prepared at home. Costs do not include alcoholic beverages, pet food, soap, cigarettes, paper goods and other nonfood items bought at the store.

“USDA costs are only guides to spending,” Ritchko said. “Families may spend more or less, depending on such factors as where they buy their food, how carefully they plan and buy, whether some food is produced at home, what foods the family likes, and how much food is prepared at home.”

“Most families will find the moderate-cost or low-cost plan suitable,” she said. “The thrifty plan, which USDA uses to set the coupon allotment in the food stamp program, is for families who have tighter budgets. Families with unlimited resources might use the liberal plan.”

To use the chart to estimate your family's food costs:

—For members eating all meals at home—or carried from home—use the amounts shown in the chart.

—For members eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from the amount shown for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person eating lunch out 5 days a week, subtract 25 percent, or one-fourth the cost shown.

—For guests, add 5 percent of the amount shown for the proper age group for each meal.

Costs in the second part of the chart are for individuals in four-person families. If your family has more or less than four, total the “individual” figures and make these adjustments, because larger families tend to buy and use food more economically than smaller ones:

—For a one-person family, add 20 percent.

—For a two-person family, add 10 percent.

—For a three-person family, add 5 percent.

—For a five- or six-person family, subtract 5 percent.

—For a family of seven or more, subtract 10 percent.

Details of the four family food plans are available from the Nutrition Education Division, HNIS, USDA, Federal Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Johna Pierce (301) 436-8617

#

TEST DETECTS, RECOVERS HARMFUL FOOD-BORNE BACTERIUM

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7—A new test that detects and recovers harmful strains of a bacterium from food and water is being patented by a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist.

Yersinia enterocolitica, a pathogen of growing concern to federal regulatory agencies, can reach infectious levels in milk, beef and other meat products within four days during refrigerated storage. It continues to grow at these cooler temperatures

Only some strains of *Y. enterocolitica* cause disease. Saumya Bhaduri of USDA's Agricultural Research Service said his test uses Congo red dye to detect the harmful ones. It also allows recovery of the harmful strains for further testing, he added.

"This recovery is important if the initial results of a test in the field have to be confirmed," said inventor Bhaduri, a microbiologist at the ARS Eastern Regional Research Center in Philadelphia. "The tests available now either kill or alter the bacterium after detection."

He said harmful bacteria can be collected from food, food processing equipment, water and sewer treatment facilities and then grown in a laboratory for identification and verification. The entire process can be done in 12 hours after initial isolation of the bacterium from food.

"The strains that are harmful cause classic food-poisoning symptoms such as abdominal pain, diarrhea and vomiting," said Bhaduri, who is in the microbial food safety research laboratory at Philadelphia. He recently filed for a patent on another dye that identifies *Y. enterocolitica* in five minutes.

His findings on the Congo red dye will be reported in an upcoming issue of the *Journal of Clinical Microbiology*.

He said the Congo red dye binds to an unidentified substance produced in *Y. enterocolitica* strains containing a plasmid. A plasmid is a small piece of DNA carrying genetic information. In this case, the plasmid converts a harmless strain to a disease-causing organism, he said.

Y. enterocolitica can grow at temperatures as low as 32 degrees F. But, he said, the genes that mark it as a disease-causing strain are expressed only at human and animal body temperature. Other tests require incubating the bacteria at body temperature to identify harmful strains, but this promotes loss of the harmful plasmid, causing confusion about the importance of the strain, he said.

Bhaduri said the test should enhance industry and regulatory agencies' evaluations of foods for the presence of *Y. enterocolitica*.

Bhaduri said the test with special equipment, is ideal for field laboratories in food processing plants, hospitals and sewage treatment facilities where it is essential to isolate the organism for detailed study.

It has become a major cause of food poisoning in The Netherlands, Belgium, Finland, Sweden, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Australia, Canada and Japan. However, it has not been as severe in the United States where there have been fewer outbreaks, Bhaduri said.

The National Centers for Disease Control has received several reports of food poisoning from *Y. enterocolitica* in recent years.

Bruce Kinzel (301) 344-2739

#

USDA ANNOUNCES TENNESSEE BURLEY TOBACCO REFERENDUM

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will hold a referendum Jan. 28 - 31 to decide whether Tennessee tobacco growers favor lease and transfer of burley poundage quotas across county lines. The Farm Poundage Quota Revision Act of 1990 authorizes USDA to conduct the referendum.

Keith D. Bjerke, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, said that some restructuring of the transfers of burley tobacco quotas would enable Tennessee growers to produce burley tobacco more efficiently. Over the past 5 years, Tennessee growers produced tobacco in a quantity equal to only 76 percent of their basic quotas.

If more than 50 percent of producers voting in the referendum favor cross-county leasing, then, beginning with the 1991 crop, lease and transfer of a burley quota from one farm to any other farm in Tennessee will be permitted. If 50 percent or more of the producers disapprove, then lease and transfer of poundage quotas will continue only within counties.

Other tobacco program provisions such as disaster lease and transfers of quotas, tobacco price support, and USDA's inspection activities will not be affected by the referendum.

The eligibility to vote in this referendum remains the same as for the triennial marketing quota referenda.

County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation committees will mail referendum ballots by Jan. 25 to all known eligible producers. Producers who do not receive a ballot may obtain one from their county ASCS office.

John C. Ryan (202) 447-8207

#

USDA REQUESTS PROPOSALS FOR MILK INVENTORY MANAGEMENT STUDY

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today requested comments from the public for a milk inventory management program to be studied by the secretary of agriculture as required by the recently enacted farm bill.

Keith Bjerke, executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, said that the secretary is required to submit before Aug. 1 a report on milk inventory management programs to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate.

The secretary is required to study a program which would establish an alternative classification of milk contained in section 8c(5) of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 and a program which would support the income of milk producers through a system of established prices and deficiency payments.

Bjerke said the secretary also is required to study, after consulting with Congress, other programs proposed by the public which the secretary deems appropriate.

The secretary is prohibited from studying any program that includes a milk production termination program similar to the Dairy Termination Program implemented in the 1985 farm bill.

Proposals must be received no later than Feb. 6 by Charles Shaw, Commodity Analysis Division, ASCS, USDA, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013.

Additional details of the proposal and the statutory criteria for evaluating proposals are published in today's Federal Register.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-8206

#

USDA ANNOUNCES DAIRY COLLECTION AND REFUND PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7—The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today that since the beginning of the year a reduction of 5 cents per hundredweight has been made in the price received by producers for all milk produced within the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. territories, and marketed for commercial use in calendar year 1991. This reduction is required by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990.

Keith Bjerke, executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, said that for milk marketed in each of the calendar years 1992 through 1995, the reduction will be 11.25 cents per hundredweight. The 11.25 cent reduction is to be increased on May 1 of each of the years 1992-95, as needed, to compensate for refunds made for the previous year. These reductions also are required by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990.

Collection of the funds will be administered for the CCC by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service.

The law also states that after the end of a calendar year, a producer may receive a refund of the entire amount deducted from the producer's milk proceeds if evidence is provided that the producer did not increase milk marketings compared with the immediately preceding calendar year.

Regulations will be issued by the secretary to implement this procedure which will be administered by the county offices of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-2797

#

SPOUSES CONSIDERED SEPARATE “PERSONS” FOR PAYMENT LIMITATION PURPOSES IN 1991

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7—Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter today announced he will exercise his discretionary authority to allow spouses to be considered separate persons for payment limitation purposes for the 1991 through 1995 crop years.

Yeutter said, “During the past several years, many farm organizations have brought to my attention the manner in which payment limitations have adversely affected family farms. I believe my decision today will provide for a much more reasonable and equitable treatment of spouses.”

The Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 gives the secretary this discretionary authority. Under previous legislation two spouses could only be considered separate persons if they met very strict requirements.

“I am going as far as the law will allow me with this decision,” Yeutter said. “This does not mean that spouses are automatically separate persons but, for example, they will be treated exactly as two siblings who are farming together.”

As required by the act, spouses must be otherwise eligible to receive payments as separate persons and must agree not to receive farm program payments directly or indirectly through any other entity.

The secretary also announced that individuals who inherit land that is enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program will receive relief from negative impacts of the CRP payment limitation with respect to such inherited land.

“In the past, heirs affected by the payment limitation were put in the difficult position of either selling the land or terminating the CRP contract when a family member died. Under today’s announcement payments received with respect to the inherited land will not be charged against the heirs’ CRP payment limitation,” Yeutter said.

Other statutory payment limitation provisions include:

- * Beginning in 1991, all payment limitation determinations for farms with more than five “persons” must be made at the state office of USDA’S Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service rather than at county ASCS offices.

- * Deficiency and diversion payments continue to be limited to \$50,000 per person.

* Marketing loan gains (except on honey), Findley payments and loan deficiency payments are covered by a new limitation of \$75,000 per person.

* There continues to be an overall \$250,000 payment limitation per person which includes payments subject to the \$50,000 limitation, payments subject to the \$75,000 limitation, resource adjustment payments, disaster payments under the 1949 Act and inventory reduction payments.

* Marketing loan gains on honey and loan forfeitures on honey are limited to \$200,000 for 1991.

* Payments received under the Wool Program are limited to \$200,000 for 1991.

* Payments received under the Mohair Program are limited to \$200,000 for 1991.

* Producers must meet the requirements to be determined “actively engaged in farming” to be eligible to receive payments under the 1991 Wheat, Feed Grain, Cotton and Rice Programs as well as under the 1991 Wool and Mohair Programs.

* Marketing loan gains received by entities for honey will be directly attributed against individual entity member’s limitations.

Robert Feist (202) 447-6789

#

USDA PROPOSES PACA LICENSE FEE INCREASE

WASHINGTON, Jan. 8—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today proposed to increase the basic annual license fee required for fruit and vegetable traders to operate in the produce industry under the provisions of the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA).

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service, said the proposed fee schedule would require a firm licensed under PACA to pay an annual fee of \$400 plus \$200 for each branch facility it operates in excess of nine. The maximum fee charged would be \$4,000. The current fee is \$300 plus \$150 for each branch facility in excess of nine, to a \$3,000 maximum.

The increase is needed to ensure that services to the produce industry are maintained since fees paid by licensees cover the cost of administering the program, Haley said. “PACA must have the funds to

handle the workload and perform other services for the benefit of the produce industry,” he said.

PACA establishes a code of good business conduct for the produce industry and requires all traders in fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables to be licensed by USDA.

Announcement of the proposal will be published in today’s Federal Register. Comments and exceptions must be received Feb. 7 and should be sent to N.E. Riddle, PACA Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, Room 2099-S, P.O. Box 96546, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456.

Carolyn Coutts (202) 447-8998

#

USDA TO INCREASE DAIRY PRODUCT GRADING AND INSPECTION FEES

WASHINGTON Jan. 8—The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today it will increase certain fees for its “voluntary” (i.e., industry solicited) grading and inspection services funded by the dairy industry effective Jan.13.

The increase reflects a projected 5-percent inflation in program operating costs, a mandated 4.1 percent cost-of-living rise in federal salaries scheduled to take effect Jan. 13, and relocation, severance and unemployment costs associated with recent program restructuring, said Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service.

The fee increases are as follows:

—from \$38 to \$41 per hour for intermittent grading and inspection services, with travel and per diem costs continuing to be charged in addition to the hourly charge.

—from \$34 to \$36 per hour for “continuous resident” grading and inspection, i.e., for a grader-inspector assigned to a plant permanently.

Dairy inspectors supervise sanitation of dairy plants, and graders ensure that the products which carry USDA grade labels meet the standards of quality those labels signify. Under law, the dairy grading program, like other voluntary commodity grading programs, is user-fee funded and must balance its fee income against its costs, Haley said. The increases

will help ensure that the dairy grading and inspection program is financially self-supporting.

These changes will be published as a final rule in the Jan. 9 Federal Register. Copies may be obtained from the Dairy Grading Section, Dairy Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2750-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 382-9381.

Carolyn Coutts (202) 447-8998

#

FSIS OFFERS NEW FOOD SAFETY PUBLICATION FOR CONSUMERS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 9—Because many of the approximately 7 million cases of foodborne illness reported each year in the United States result from consumers mishandling food after purchase, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service is offering a new publication to help teach consumers how to handle food safely.

The publication, *A Quick Consumer Guide to Safe Food Handling*, was developed after food scientists analyzed consumer handling of food in the home, using a scientific method called the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) approach. This system identifies the critical points in everyday food handling where experts say the wrong move could result in foodborne illness.

"According to statistics from the Centers for Disease Control, approximately 85 percent of foodborne illness incidents could be avoided by following safe methods for food handling," said Dr. Lester M. Crawford, administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service.

A Quick Consumer Guide to Safe Food Handling is a fold-out publication providing do's and don'ts of safe food handling, with an emphasis on handling meat and poultry products. The publication covers food safety aspects of food shopping, food storage, meal preparation and cooking, microwaving, serving, and handling leftovers.

The guide includes cold storage and cooking temperature charts which provide recommended temperatures for meat and poultry products. The cold storage chart tells how long a wide variety of perishable foods will last at freezer and refrigerator temperatures.

The publication also offers tips on handling refrigerated and frozen foods during an electrical power outage, and includes specific information on how to report a case of foodborne illness.

For a single free copy of A Quick Consumer Guide to Safe Food Handling, consumers should write to:

Consumer Information Center
574-X
Pueblo, CO 81009

The Food Safety and Inspection Service and its 9,000 employees are dedicated to ensuring that the U.S. meat and poultry supply is safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled.

Consumers with questions about safe food handling can also call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. EST. Residents of the Washington, D.C., area can call (202) 447-3333.

Jim Greene (202) 382-0314

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USDA PROPOSES GRADE STANDARDS FOR DAIRY BREEDING CATTLE

WASHINGTON, Jan. 9—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking comment on a proposal to establish U.S. standards for dairy breeding cows and heifers.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said USDA is proposing the standards in response to initiatives from the dairy industry and exporters.

Four grades would be proposed for these dairy animals—"Supreme," "Approved," "Medium," and "Common." "Currently, there are no uniform grade standards for this type of cattle," Haley said. Standards vary from state to state, he said.

In the past, when dairy breeding cows and heifers were exported relatively infrequently, absence of national standards for them had no large economic consequences. Since exports of these cattle began climbing about five years ago, it has become impractical to compare bids

on export contracts based on standards differing between states, or on standards unique to each exporter, Haley said.

Criteria for the standards derive from features dairy scientists know predict value. Five features, gauged to optimums for specific breeds, are: weight adjusted to age; body capacity; condition of legs and feet; mammary development; and dairy character (as distinguished from beef character), including items such as thinness of hide, angularity, and shape of head.

Use of the standards would be voluntary, i.e., industry-requested, and paid for by the user, as in all USDA grading programs.

“Countries like Brazil, Canada, Mexico, Turkey, South Korea, Japan, Venezuela, China, Taiwan and, until recently, Iraq, have been buying thousands of U.S. dairy breeding cows and heifers worth millions each year. The industry is ready for a common trading language that national standards represent,” Haley said.

The initiative for the standards came in 1984, when the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture authorized its National Association of Marketing Officials to form a dairy industry task force to work with USDA to devise national standards for breeding cows and heifers.

Details of the proposed standards will be published in today’s Federal Register. Comments, in duplicate and postmarked no later than March 11, should be sent to Fred L. Williams Jr., Livestock and Seed Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2603-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456. For copies of the Federal Register announcement and additional information, call Williams at (202) 447-4486.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

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USDA ANNOUNCES FOOD SAFETY WORKSHOPS ON MEAT AND POULTRY INSPECTION

WASHINGTON, Jan. 9—The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety and Inspection Service will hold five workshops between February 1991 and March 1992 for industry to develop model hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) plans for specific meat and poultry products, FSIS administrator Dr. Lester M. Crawford announced today.

An HACCP system is a specialized method for identifying and preventing hazards during food production to ensure public health protection.

“The HACCP system is recognized worldwide as the most effective way to ensure production of safe food,” said Crawford. “We want to stimulate the development of practical HACCP plans for industry to use in meat and poultry slaughtering and processing. We are seeking technical experts from the meat and poultry industries to participate in the workshops.”

Crawford said the generic plans developed at the workshops will later be tested in volunteer plants as part of the agency’s HACCP implementation study.

The first workshop will develop a generic HACCP plan for refrigerated foods, specifically “keep refrigerated” products containing uncured meat or poultry that are cooked, assembled, then packaged. The workshop is scheduled for Feb. 26-28, at the Tremont Suite Hotel, 222 St. Paul Place, Baltimore, Md.

Subsequent workshops are tentatively scheduled as follows: cooked sausage, May 1991; poultry slaughter, July 1991; fresh ground beef, December 1991; and swine slaughter, March 1992. Specific dates and locations for these workshops will be announced later.

Industry technical experts interested in participating in the refrigerated foods workshop or subsequent workshops must submit written requests stating: the name of the workshop, affiliations with trade associations or other organizations, and whether they will represent a particular firm or work independently. Applicants representing a particular firm should indicate the relative size of the operation, major product lines and approximate product volumes.

Written requests to participate in the refrigerated foods workshop must be received by Feb. 4.

The workshops also will be open to the public for observation. Since space may be limited, people interested in observing the workshops have the option of submitting written requests stating their name, address, and phone number; the name of the workshop they are interested in; and who they will represent.

Written requests to participate or observe and general questions about the workshops should be directed to: Catherine M. DeRoever, Director, Executive Secretariat, FSIS, USDA, Room 3175-S, Washington, D.C. 20250. DeRoever may be reached by phone at (202) 447-9150.

Requests for technical information on the agency's HACCP study should be addressed to: Dr. Wallace I. Leary, Director, HACCP Special Team, FSIS, USDA, Rm. 0114-S, Washington, D.C. 20250; telephone (202) 245-5087.

Notice of the refrigerated foods workshop was published in the Jan. 4 Federal Register.

FSIS and its 9,000 employees are dedicated to ensuring meat and poultry products are safe, wholesome and accurately labeled.

Jim Greene (202) 382-0314

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MICROBIOLOGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO MEET JANUARY 22-25 IN ATLANTA

WASHINGTON, Jan. 9—Subcommittees of the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods will meet Jan. 22-25, at the Atlanta Hilton & Towers Hotel, 255 Courtland St., N.E., Atlanta, Ga. 30303.

Sessions of the *Listeria monocytogenes* subcommittee are scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Jan. 22 and 23. Sessions of the seafood subcommittee are scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Jan. 24 and 25.

“The committee advises the secretary of agriculture and the secretary of health and human services on criteria for assessing the safety and wholesomeness of food, and for assessing the effectiveness of food manufacturing practices,” said Committee Chairman Dr. Lester M. Crawford, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

Microbiological criteria—limits on the presence of specific microorganisms—are among the criteria that can be used.

The meetings are open to the public on a space available basis. Comments may be filed with the committee before or after the meeting and should be addressed to: Catherine M. DeRoeper, Director, Executive Secretariat, FSIS, Room 3175-S, Washington, D.C. 20250. Background materials are available from DeRoeper at (202) 447-9150.

Jim Greene (202) 382-0314

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